ART EXHIBITION CATALOGUES REPUBLISHED ON MICROFICHE

Published on microfiche by: Somerset House, 417 Maitland Avenue, Teaneck, New Jersey 07666

Date of publication and production of master: 1975

Series: The purpose of this series is to make available those catalogues that have lasting interest through their text or their illustrations. Catalogues and cumulations of titles in the series are available from the publishers.

Serial numbers: Each title is given a seven-figure serial number in the top right-hand corner of the microfiche title strip. This is an accession number. The first figure indicates the number of the list in which the title first appears. The first three-figure group signifies the gallery or museum, the second three-figure group signifies the accession number for that title.

Copyright: The microfiche edition is the copyright of Somerset House (RMRCO Inc.) 1975. Any rights relating to the full-size edition reside with the original copyright holders.

Technical data: Producing laboratory: Micrographics Enterprises Inc., Brooklyn, New York.

HELENA RUBINSTEIN'S NEW ART CENTER

MASTERS OF ABSTRACT ART

MASTERS OF ABSTRACT ART

Louis B. Kapel

MASTERS OF ABSTRACT ART

AN EXHIBITION
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE AMERICAN RED CROSS
assembled by Stephan C. Lion

April 1st to May 15th, 1942
at HELENA RUBINSTEIN'S
NEW ART CENTER
715 Fifth Avenue, New York City

EDITORS: Stephan C. Lion
Charmion Wiegand

2

TYPOGRAPHY: Herbert Bayer
PRINTING: H. K. Advertising Press

AMERICAN RED CROSS

OFFICERS NEW YORK CHAPTER

Chairman
General James G. Harbord

Executive Director General
General Robert C. Davis

National Director Red Cross War Fund
Mr. S. Sloan Colt

American Red Cross War Fund, Greater New York
Mr. Leon Fraser

Executive Chairman of the Women's Committee
Mrs. David Challinor

Chairman of the Exhibition Committee
Mrs. Frederick R. Childs

SPONSORS

Mr. and Mrs. Walter C. Arensberg
Mrs. George F. Baker
Dr. Albert C. Barnes
Mr. Rudolf Bauer
Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius N. Bliss
Col. & Mrs. Henry S. Breckinridge
Mr. & Mrs. David Challinor
Mrs. W. Murray Crane
Mrs. Frank Crowninshield
Mrs. Charles Suydam Cutting
Baron & Baroness Joost Dahlerup
General & Mrs. Robert C. Davis
Mr. & Mrs. Albert De Chiara
Mr. & Mrs. Lewis W. Douglas
Miss Katherine S. Dreier
Baron & Baroness Cassel van Doorn
Mr. Herbert H. Elfers
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas L. Elliman
Mrs. Milton Erlanger
Mrs. M. Ernst (Miss P. Guggenheim)
Mr. & Mrs. Marshall Field
Mr. A. E. Gallatin
Mr. & Mrs. Douglas Gibbons
Mr. A. Conger Goodyear
Mr. & Mrs. William G. Green
Mrs. Simon Guggenheim
Mrs. S. R. Guggenheim
Mrs. Duncan G. Harris
Miss Malvina Hoffman
Mr. Sidney Janis
Mr. T. Catesdy Jones
Mr. Frederick T. Kiesler
Mr. Douglas Leigh
Madame Majeska
Mr. Wilfred A. May
Mr. & Mrs. Cord Meyer
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Manship
Mr. & Mrs. John B. Marfh
Mr. Samuel Kootz
Mr. & Mrs. G. W. Oakes
Mrs. Laurent Oppenheim
Miss Nellie Oppenheim
Mr. Walter Pach
Mr. Roland Palmedo
Dr. & Mrs. Wm. Barclay Parsons, Jr.
Mr. Stephen S. Pichetto
Mr. Robert H. Pitney
Mrs. Roy A. Rainey
Miss Jean A. Reid
Mr. Edward G. Robinson
Mr. & Mrs. George B. St. George
Mrs. Kate Steinitz
Mr. Louis Shapiro
Mr. & Mrs. James F. Shaw
Mr. & Mrs. Percy S. Straus
Mrs. Adam K. Stricker
Mr. & Mrs. William Howard Taft, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. Edward M. M. Warburg
Mrs. George Henry Warren, Jr.
Mr. & Mrs. George E. Watson
Mr. Maurice Wertheim
Mr. & Mrs. Laurent White
Miss Adele Wilde
Mrs. Norman B. Woolworth

FOREWORD

In this exhibition, the effort has been made to present characteristic works of artists who express the most mature and authentic development in Abstract Art.

Today, the democracies are the only countries in the world where "New Art Forms" can develop and flourish. Because Abstract Art is the expression of a free culture, it has been ruthlessly suppressed in the dictator-ridden countries. During our century, the tendency towards abstraction in art has assumed the proportions of a world-wide movement, and has arisen from the need for clarification and progress.

Due to practical difficulties, it has been impossible to include works of all living artists within this direction.

Grateful appreciation is extended to Madame Helena Rubinstein for her generous sponsorship and assistance in presenting this exhibition.

Thanks are also due to Madame Madeleine Boyd, Miss Charmion Wiegand and Mr. Herbert Bayer for contributing their time and effort.

Full acknowledgment is due to those who have kindly lent works from their collections to this exhibition: The Museum of Modern Art, New York City, Miss Peggy Guggenheim, 'Art of this Century', Mr. Walter Pach, Mr. George L. K. Morris, Mr. Robert H. Pitney, Mr. James Johnson Sweeney, Mr. Hans Richter, Mr. J. K. Thannhauser, Mr. J. B. Neuman, Jacques Seligman & Co., the Nierendorf Gallery, New York, the Willard Gallery, New York, and the Buchholz Gallery New York; and to the artists without whose generous cooperation this exhibition could not have taken place.

The entire proceeds of this exhibition are contributed to the American Red Cross.

Stephan C. Lion.

CONTENTS

	Page
FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT	5
NEW ART FORMS, A Composite Statement	7
PURE PLASTIC ART, Piet Mondrian	7
THE QUESTION OF 'TRUTH'. Fernand Leger	11
PICTORIAL ORDER, George L. K. Morris	11
ART OF THE CITY, Stuart Davis	12
ORCHESTRATION OF THE FORM, Hans Richter	13
THE CONTENT OF ABSTRACT ART, Carl Robert Holty	16
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE, Harry Holtzman	18
CATALOGUE AND ILLUSTRATIONS	21

NEW ART FORMS

Abstract art does not appeal to the comparative of the conscious intellect, but to the superlative of the subconscious emotions, it is the projected intuitive expression of fundamental experience; its form is the embodiment of the artist's intuition of life, freed from the reiteration of concrete appearance, thus revealing the more intensely the dynamics which lead to its creation, the laws which govern its existence, its structural and emotional interest, and by these means its significance in the scheme of the universe.

Beneath the differences of individual *surface* are the universals of basic form—the factor which governs the relationships of part to part, of part to whole, and of the whole form to the universal environment of which it forms part.

Any person living in the 20th century should know by now that physical perfection is an illusion, that quantitative or scientific knowledge is merely information or an absolute of perpetual incompletion, and that aesthetics is as near to completion or perfection as we can come, being the only qualitative form of knowledge that we possess.

Aesthetic pleasure is the philosophical reflection of truth, and is our joy in this assurance of a universe harmonious beyond the power of accident, united in rhythm which finds echo in our own minds and feelings.

This is a composite statement.

PURE PLASTIC ART

Unconsciously, every true artist has always been moved by the beauty of line, color and relationships for their own sake and not by what they may represent. He has always tried to express all energy and all vital richness by these means alone. Nevertheless, consciously he has followed the forms of objects. Consciously, he has tried to express things and sensations through modelling and technique. But unconsciously, *he has established*

planes; he has augmented the tension of line and purified the color.

Thus, gradually through centuries, the culture of painting has led to *the total abolition of the limiting form and particular representation.* In our time, art has been liberated from everything that prevents it from being truly plastic. This liberation is of the greatest importance for art, the purpose of which is to conquer individual expression and to reveal, as far as possible, the universal aspect of life.

Every expression of art has its own laws which accord with the principal law of art and of life: that of equilibrium. On these laws depends the degree of equilibrium that may be realized, and therefore, at what point disequilibrium may be destroyed. This is clear to us if we compare the different expressions of past and contemporary art. In diverse ways, both have always tried to express equilibrium and both have sought identically to create a universal expression. The aspiration toward equilibrium and that toward disequilibrium constantly oppose each other. This is only the expression of *culture moving toward equilibrium.* Culture progresses in the measure that we feel the oppression of the tragic —an oppression caused by the unequivalence of these two polarities in human life.

In Nature, a complete deliverance from tragic feeling is not possible. In life, where the physical form is not only necessary but of the greatest importance, equilibrium will always be very relative. But man, evolving toward the equilibrium of his duality, *will create in ever greater degree, in life as in art, equivalent relationships and therefore, equilibrium.* Social and economic life today already demonstrates his effort toward an exact equilibrium. Material life will not be forever menaced and made tragic. Nor will our moral life always be oppressed by the domination of material existence.

Increasingly, science succeeds in maintaining our physical well-being. Through superior technics, primitive materials are brought closer to the needs of man. Human life, although dependent on the physical and material, *will not always remain dominated by uncontrolled Nature.* Through the equivalence of relationships, equilibrium will be approximated in every purely plastic creation. Within the limits of the plastic means, man can create a new reality.

It is only after a long culture that within the plastic expression of the limiting form, one perceives another plastic expression closely allied with it, but, at the same time, opposed to it. Art today, after a secular culture of limited form, has succeeded in establishing this plastic expression: *it is the clear realization of liberated and universal rhythm distorted and hidden in the individual rhythm of the limiting form.*

The way toward the creation of a new plastic expression, that of liberated rhythm, in literature as well as in sculpture and painting, has been prepared by different movements in art, above all, by Cubism, Futurism and Dadaism. Art demands release from the limiting form because the latter prevents the expression of liberated rhythm. Far from ignoring our individual nature, far from losing "the human note" in the work of art, pure plastic expression is the union of the individual with the universal. For liberated rhythm is composed of these two aspects of life in equivalence. Hence art has to attain an exact equilibrium through the creation of pure plastic means composed in absolute oppositions. In this way, the two oppositions (vertical and horizontal) are in equivalence, that is to say, of the same value: a prime necessity for equilibrium. By means of abstraction, art has interiorized form and color and brought the curved line to its maximum tension: the straight line. Using the rectangular opposition—the constant relationship—establishes the universal individual duality: unity.

In the pure plastic composition, the constant relationship expresses immutability. It is the universal expression in opposition to the *relationship of dimension* which is the diverse and individual expression in the pure plastic work of art. This constant relationship is therefore living and concrete for a mentality that tends toward universal-individual equivalence. The different proportions of the opposing duality of the straight line produce a rhythm always varied by the relationships of dimensions and at the same time, constant through the constant relationship. When it avoids establishing limiting form, *this liberated rhythm is the plastic expression hidden in reality, created through conscious feeling for universal equilibrium. It is the expression of palpable reality on a more elevated plane: the expression of true reality and of truly "human life"— constant yet always changing.*

Limiting form always tells us something; it is *descriptive*. As long as it is emphasized in the work of art, individual expression dominates. It could be objected, that if the universal expression in the work of art is strong enough, the descriptive element, the limiting form, will not interfere. In fact, many present and past works of art seem to plead for this conclusion. But why employ the form if it weakens the pure plastic expression? Everything, however, depends upon the epoch in which we live. In the past, the limiting form was logical in plastic art. For this reason it is not disturbing in the masterpieces of art; on the contrary, it sustains them. In our epoch, every manifestation in life as well as in plastic expression, shows a desire for liberation. The limiting form then becomes an obstacle. The fact that palpable reality is revealed in limiting form, and also the effect of tradition, encourages the use of limiting forms in art. Above all, there exists another cause: the unconscious love of tragic, disequilibrated feelings.

Our actual environment, (architecture and utilities, etc.) which is more easily liberated from tragic expression, sometimes necessitates a more complex plastic expression than the work of art. Although qualified by aesthetic conceptions, our environment is, above all created by necessity, utility and function. In our time, there exists a tendency to suppress aesthetic feelings. Nevertheless, these are essential in order to guide any realization, so that our physical and normal needs may be satisfied. A new aesthetic for our actual environment, which exerts such a profound influence on our mentality, can be deduced from the principles of pure plastic expression in art. In the future, the realization of pure plastic expression in palpable reality will replace the work of art. But, in order to achieve this, orientation toward a universal conception and detachment from the oppression of nature is necessary. Then we will no longer have need of pictures and sculpture, for we will live in realized art.

If we conceive of truly human life as continuous enjoyment in discovering and creating concrete equilibrium, then this equilibrium becomes essential for us. All abstract expressions in life, like science, philosophy, and all abstract creations like art, may be regarded as only so many means to attain equilibrium.

"Art" is only a "substitute" as long as the beauty of life is deficient. It will disappear in proportion as life gains in equilibrium. Today art is still of the greatest importance because it demonstrates plastically in a direct way, liberated of individual conceptions, the laws of equilibrium.

March, 1942. Piet Mondrian.

Translated by Charmion Wiegand.

THE QUESTION OF "TRUTH"

One might think that moving pictures, for instance, could represent the 'truth'. Not at all. They are the product of actors, stage sets, make-up—all that is artificial. Perhaps if one could photograph without people being aware of the fact, one could get a true picture.

We spend our life hiding the truth. Education, religion, 'the decorative life', are three inventions, three envelopes created to conceal the truth. However, there would be no art, no science without 'truth', which is the driving power, the means of control for every moving or useful work that man has created for his daily satisfaction.

This concern about 'truth' is always present in us, around us everywhere, for truth possesses the force of natural non-controllable events. There is the tempest, the cyclone in it. It can be the cause of irreparable disasters. The 'enfant terrible' who speaks the truth is a nightmare for the rest of the family. 'Truth' in painting is color at its fullest: red, black, yellow, since the pure tone in painting is reality.

Every period has its realism, today's realism is based upon materialism: "Not the red 'skirt', but the 'red' is reality."

Fernand Léger.

PICTORIAL ORDER

Rarely has a historical period found greater need for an ordered expression than the present. While the pressure of external events becomes continually more devastating, the individual mind searches more and more

for an expressive area (such as only the artist can create) where it may be temporarily held in repose.

The best abstract paintings emphasize order and control over the canvas areas. The development of the movement as a whole shows a continuous effort toward the quieting of pictorial elements. Cézanne once remarked that he preferred the still-life to portraiture because an orange was "quieter" than a face. (Kandinsky a generation later suggested that *he* employed geometric shapes because a circle was "quieter" than an orange.) Such tendencies in no way derive from a desire for the inanimate; aesthetic chaos had merely resulted in such confusion that certain artists recognized the necessity for a new beginning. They must know their surfaces so completely that the elements of form and structure could be handled again with freedom and sureness.

Some day perhaps more will be written of the extent to which art-forms endeavor to satisfy the unconscious emotional and spiritual desires of the race. Is not art thus accustomed to find its "typical" expression through a sort of paradox? Note how the secure Victorians produced the most agitated and disorganized expression that the world has known. On the other hand, the Byzantine period, so curiously like our own, accompanied the noisy fall of Rome with an art that was supremely quiet and reticent. So it is that the abstract painters of today counter-act the dissolution of the outside world with an expressive concentration that we hope will prove prophetically controlled and measured.

March, 1942. George L. K. Morris.

ART OF THE CITY

The authentic painting of the last 75 years is one of the affirmative and lasting social values of the modern epoch. Produced chiefly in France, or under French influence, its base now lies in New York City. It is just as appropriate to call certain phases of this art, abstract, as it would be to call

an aeroplane an 'abstraction'. But aside from the meaningless tag-line, the important thing is that modern art is international in content. It spans the social convulsions that we hope are bringing world unity on a level compatible with modern knowledge.

The United States has tended more toward cultural refrigerators and washing machines than toward art as an integral social value, but now there should be room for a real art in painting. This can only be based on the healthy aspects of the vision of new art forms, an art which is anti-rural, in the same sense that rural electrification is anti-rural. It is an art of the city, just as our own most vigorous authentic art, Negro Jazz, is an art of the city. For too many years past, our artists, and their hierarchy of promoters, have been singing, "I've got those cultural isolationist blues"; "Bring back those dear old Renaissance days"; and "Slip the candid camera to me, John boy".

The victims of this plague of cultural jitters are beginning to show signs of exhaustion, and this exhibition may function as a much needed shot-in-the-arm. An art which has survived the exhaust fumes of museum and foundation-sponsored Americana painting, and the embalming fluids of the poets, careful scholars, and art historians, can take almost anything and still bounce,—I hope. I recommend it as one essential and important source of morale at this difficult time.

March, 1942

Stuart Davis.

ORCHESTRATION OF THE FORM

The explosive energy of Cubism reduced traditional painting to a heap of fragments.

The artists after Cézanne fought for the reorganization of plastic expression: the constructive principles of painting. In this way, the object, which had been the main consideration in painting for centuries, lost its supremacy and its natural appearance. On the one hand, nothing was left us but the fragments, which we could paste together to make objects

again. On the other hand, there appeared the liberated form: "pure", "abstract", "absolute", "non-objective" and "universal". Thus at the beginning of this century, artistic freedom was thrust upon us — a freedom in which we had to discover ourselves. This liberation was a unique experience hitherto unknown in Occidental art. It might have led to anarchy, to unbridled improvisation (and did in some cases), if in that generation there had not existed a deep instinct to search for the basic principles of plastic expression. But because that instinct survived and continues to grow, the watchword of this struggle has been handed on from that generation to this.

We have been given the task of organizing the abundant possibilities still undeveloped in this field. This is the deeper meaning of the evolution of pure form. How the artists made use of this freedom, how step by step searching in different directions, they found the principles of a pure form "language", this is the history of a style. The evolution of this style is as much the basis of the art history of our time as the history of the art movements: Impressionism, Cubism, Expressionism, Futurism, Suprematism, Constructivism, Purism, Neo-Plasticism, Dadaism, Neo-Classicism and Surrealism. Within each of these various movements, the long struggle for this style—the style of the twentieth century—was continued. Yet none of these were identical with it.

The Suprematist work of the Russian, Malevich; the square of the Dutch painters, Mondrian and Van Doesburg; the sign sequences of Vicking Eggeling (from Lund, Sweden), are the most important steps on the way to a new language of form. It is significant that these steps were completed during the four years of the First World War. Malevich and Mondrian realized their experience within the domain of easel painting; by the logic of the same evolution, Eggeling was forced off the canvas.

When I first met Eggeling in Switzerland in the beginning of 1918, we were both passionately absorbed in the same problem: the basic law of expression. While I was still in the experimental stage, he had already built a whole system. Working with the precision of a scientist, he had developed the perfect technique for bringing form to its maximum of expression (in his "orchestration of the line"). Absorbed in the same task, we collaborated

until two years before he died in 1925 at the age of forty-five. However the principles, not the objects showed us how "to carry on in the same way as Nature organizes matter, and how to further develop the work of Nature." The result of all these studies can be reduced to a single law: that of contrast, which gives the maximum of tension and that of analogy, which relates the contrasts;

CONTRAST - ANALOGY
ANALOGY - CONTRAST
CONTRAST - ANALOGY
ANALOGY - CONTRAST
CONTRAST - ANALOGY
ANALOGY - CONTRAST

This is the principle of counterpoint. It is not limited to music. It is more than a technique. It is a philosophic way of dealing with experience: "the laws which condition Becoming in relation to other Becoming are the constant substratum of appearance." (Eggeling).

In plastic art, counterpoint has never been followed to its ultimate consequences. The use of the object in painting prevented this. It could be done more easily in music where there is no object but only pure sound (relatively). Today it can be done in plastic art. In fact everything can be given a new sensual intensity through the coordination of all the means of expression: rhythm, proportion, position, dimension, number, intensity etc. Thus all the qualities of liberated form may come to life.

Following our newly conquered knowledge as closely as possible, we built up one "theme" after another through its various stages of expression. Every transformation led to new relationships and these again to others, and so on. Thus the picture became a sequence of pictures and the sequences became a special form: the scroll painting.

At the time, the form of the scroll painting seemed new to us, but actually it is a very old one. While easel painting is only several centuries old, scroll painting is thousands of years old (Egypt, China). However, the

scrolls we made were not concerned with subject matter but with abstract narratives of pure form—its becoming, its being, its beauty. "What should be grasped and given form are things in flux" (Eggeling).

Later, in 1921, came our first abstract films. Eggeling made the "Diagonal Symphony". I made "Rhythm 21". We used the film as a medium for making a transition to real concrete movement. In this way, we entered an entirely new dimension. The scroll and the films we made, even when the same theme was used for both, as in Eggeling's "Diagonal Symphony", belong to two different arts. The difference between them lies in their relation to time. In the film and music, time passes without cessation, but in scroll painting, despite its epic sequences, the general form remains static.

One may assume that the Egyptians and the Chinese felt the appeal of this particular form of expression and that they enjoyed arresting time in this way. Otherwise this form would not have arisen and would not have been preserved, as it still is in China today. There is a static unity which binds together the dynamic sequences; it is the form of the whole scroll. The unity of time is the same in the easel painting, although its expression is fundamentally different. In the scroll painting, the orchestration of all stages of form development is seen and felt simultaneously—backward and forward. This is one of the main differences in this new plastic expression and a source of its real beauty.

"Becoming and duration are not in any way a diminution of unchanging eternity; they are its expression. Every form occupies not only space but time. Being and becoming are one unity."— (Eggeling).

March, 1942. Hans Richter.

Translated by Charmion Wiegand.

THE CONTENT OF ABSTRACT ART

When Abstract Art is discussed, or attempts are made to explain it, seldom, indeed, does the interpreter rise above its mechanical aspects. To be

sure, the means cannot be completely divorced from the aesthetic purpose. This is true of any art form. But the persistent reference to how it is made might explain the difference between an ornamental art of pure taste and exquisite craft and Abstract Art, which, though ornamental, exists on a far loftier plane; its unity is created by forceful and accelerated oppositions rather than through the purely calligraphic pacification of its elements.

It is no more difficult to explain the aesthetic content of a work of art than to explain the sensations of love and hate. For the processes of harmony and disharmony which produce art are as organic and simple as those biological and psychological ones that produce our most primitive reactions to life itself. It is one thing, however, to give an adequate answer, another to be understood.

When we speak of an art for all, we must never forget that all culture in life and art must be experienced individually. The beholder must bring to a work of art an emotional readiness and proper awareness. It is more hunger than taste that is required of him. Too frequently that same beholder has neither one nor the other, and is impelled to artistic experience by social compulsion or a feeling that he is inferior if he does not understand what other people do.

In acquiring experience, it is most natural to proceed by relating one experience to another; that of light with shade; pleasure with pain; the present with the past. It is this last that most people constantly place in operation and which robs them of the full sensation of the present. Once, however, mature experience and consciousness of life are acquired, a direct appreciation of each succeeding experience should be expected. Those memories of another day, which seem to make the present one more significant, actually rob it of its essence—of its unique quality. This present day of which I speak will never come again, has never existed before, and should be enjoyed or suffered on its own terms.

Beauty in its own form in painting is a matter of colors and forms, rhythms and movements, and should be lived completely and wholly, for it is weakened if we approach it with referent associations. Actually this purity of approach can work both ways. Kandinsky once said, that since he

had found an expression for himself in painting which was pure, he could, for the first time since his childhood, enjoy a landscape for its own sake—it was no longer a point of departure for another imaginative adventure. If this seems to be true only of a painter, let us recall how often we have heard a layman remark when regarding nature, "if you painted it, they wouldn't believe it."

Difficult as it may seem to arrive at such detachment, we must not forget that in this great historic change now taking place, almost all our cherished concepts prove to be shifting, and only that portion of them remains a base which relates to the purest and most profound instincts of mankind. These alone, we dare to refer to as constant. An Abstract painting should be approached with the same innocence of emotion as we approach the simplest physical sensations such as breathing, taste and touch. It is medieval to believe that man's aesthetic enjoyment can never be divorced from the personal tragedy, although there is an art, which cannot be called free from it. For example, the classical drama and the music of the later Beethoven. This art is directed toward some of our senses, but there is also one which is directed toward all of them, such as the music of Bach which achieves a complete integration of our spiritual and physical forces. Out of such integration arises an emotion which, perhaps for want of a better word, we are justified in calling universal. The fire of this art is not a primitive, uncontrolled flame but is like the fire man has harnessed in the electric current. Too frequently the beholder seeks in the work of art confirmation of what he knows, whereas great art is the revelation of what, at best, he can only sense and divine.

March 1942. Carl Robert Holty.

PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

There is no argument, even from the most representational viewpoint, against the fact that unity is the vital expression of plastic art. But gen-

erally, the perception of the essential plastic means of expression remains confused. The unity of content and form are consequently weakened. Even among artists of "abstract" tendencies, such inimical concepts as tactility and texture are introduced. As well, the expression of the dynamic relationships of the essential elements of form and space are subjugated to a literal, mechanical viewpoint of movement and balance. Just as symbolism obscures and prevents the essential expression of dynamic equilibrium, the implication of tactility and mechanical movement maintains the same impasse; for all such expression is as naturalistic as any other "representational" form.

Abstract plastic art is the pure expression of the aesthetic perception of spatial unity: equilibrium. In abstract art, painting and sculpture are concepts that specify the actual limitations of works of art; both are expressed by the same essential plastic means: pure color, line and plane. The artist is forced to express his aesthetic perception of life through painting and sculpture because civilization has not reached the development where the pure expression of plastic art can be made a living part of created environment. For actually, in relation to the work of art, architectural environment is static and disequilibrated. Thus "art" remains separated from "architecture" and functions only as a reciprocally decorative adjunct. The architecture must be neutralized in relation to the work of art and the work of art must be framed and adjusted to a proper space in which it can appear neutral.

Pure abstract painting and sculpture are expressed by the same essential plastic means: the dynamic opposition of pure colors, planes and straight lines in horizontal and vertical relationship. The organic unity of nature appears in terms of multiplicities of complex forms, colors, lines and volumes. Pure abstract art is expressed by the aesthetic integration of form and space. It is intrinsic equilibrium, equivalent with organic unity but differentiated from it.

The expressionistic "playing with shapes and colors" oppresses the essential expression of the plastic means as much as representation and symbolism. Then art remains decoration in content as well as in form and progress toward the integration of "art" and "architecture" is impeded. The intrin-

sic limitations of the means of expression are subjugated by the illusory effects of appearance. The imposition of arbitrary or representational shapes and colors limits the possibilities of establishing equilibrium, for they are as particular as any other form of appearance. They become more or less abstract in accordance with the degree of their essential expression. In pure abstract art, the appearance of the straight line, the pure color and the vertical-horizontal relationship is the *consequence* of dynamic opposition; the plastic means are then free from the domination of subjectivism and particularity. The perception of shape, color and relationship results from the intuition of the function of essential plastic means.

As long as the subjective viewpoint dominates, illusion and fantasy are the expression of the work; then the personal dominates. The personal must find its true expression by the elimination of subjective factors because art is the expression of the universal.

March, 1942 Harry Holtzman.

CATALOGUE

ALBERS, JOSEPH
Born Germany, 1888. Lives at Black Mountain, North Carolina

1 ***Open (B), oil, 1940***
Lent by the Nierendorf Gallery, New York

ARCHIPENKO, ALEXANDER
Born Kiev, Russia, 1887. Lives in New York City

2 ***Arabian, terracotta, 1935***
Lent by Mr. J. K. Thannhauser

2a ***Chromium Torso, bronze, 1930***

ARP, HANS
Born Strassburg, 1888. Lives at Meudon, near Paris, France

3 ***Papier colle, 1938***

4 ***Relief, 1938***
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

BAYER, HERBERT
Born Haag, Austria, 1900. Lives in New York City

5 ***Communication, oil, 1941***

BOLOTOWSKY, ILYA
Born Petrograd, Russia, 1907. Lives in New York City

6 ***Composition within a Square, oil, 1942***

BRANCUSI, CONSTANTIN
Born Roumania, 1876. Lives in Paris

7 ***Bird in Flight, brass, 1920***
Lent by Mr. Robert H. Pitney

BRAQUE, GEORGES
Born Argenteuil, France, 1882. Lives in Paris, France

8 ***Cubiste Composition, oil, 1912***
Lent by Jacques Seligman & Co., New York

9 ***Composition, college, 1912***
Lent by Madame Helena Rubinstein

BROWNE, BYRON
Born Yonkers, New York, 1907. Lives in New York City

10 ***Abstraction, oil, 1941***

CALDER, ALEXANDER
Born Philadelphia, 1898. Lives in R. F. D. Roxbury, Conn.

11 ***Mobile, steel, 1939***
Lent by Mr. James Johnson Sweeney

DAVIS, STUART
Born Philadelphia, 1894. Lives in New York City

12 *Hot Still-Scape for 6 Colors, oil, 1941*

DELAUNAY, ROBERT
Born Paris 1885. Lives in Paris, France

13 *The Windows, oil, 1912*

Lent by 'Art of this Century'

DILLER, BURGOYNE
Born New York City, 1906. Lives in New York City

14 *Construction, wood, 1941*

DOESBURG, THEO VAN
Born Utrecht, The Netherlands, 1883. Died at Davos, 1931

15 *Contre Composition, oil, 1928*

Lent by 'Art of this Century'

DOMELA-NIEUWENHUIS, CESAR
Born Amsterdam, 1900. Lives in Paris, France

16 *Construction, wood and metal, 1935*

Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

22

DREWES, WERNER
Born Germany, 1899. Lives in New York City

17 *Space conception No. 154, oil, 1941*

DUCHAMP, MARCEL
Born Blainville, France, 1887. Lives in Paris, France

18 *Young Man in a Train, oil, 1912*

Lent by 'Art of this Century'

19 *Anaemic Cinema, a 'variation' on the circle and the spiral to his 'rotoreliefs', 1927*

Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, New York

EGGELING, VIKING
Born Lund, Sweden, 1880. Died in Berlin, Germany, 1925

20 *I Horizontal-Vertical Messe, scroll, drawing, 1919*

21 *II Horizontal-Vertical Messe, drawing, 1920*

Lent by Mr. Hans Richter

ETTING, GLORIA and EMLEN
Residence Haverford, Pennsylvania

22 *Laureate, a film-poem, 1941*

FEININGER, LYONEL
Born New York City, 1871. Lives in New York City

23 *Zircho VII, oil, 1918*

FERREN, JOHN
Born Pendleton, Oregon, 1905. Lives in New York City
24 *Composition, plaster, 1938*

FISCHINGER, OSCAR
Born Germany, 1900. Lives in Los Angeles, California
25 *Rhapsody Hongroise, film, 1932*

GABO, NAHUM
Born Bryansk, Russia, 1890. Lives in London
26 *Construction, metal and celluloid, 1936*
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

GLARNER, FRITZ
Born Switzerland, 1899. Lives in New York City
27 *Composition Relative, oil, 1942*

GLEIZES, ALBERT
Born Paris, 1881. Lives in Paris
28 *The Dancer, oil, 1915*

GRANT, DWINELL
Born Springfield, Ohio, 1912. Lives in New York City
29 *Non-objective Study, film, 1940*
30 *Contrathemis, film, 1941*

GREENE, BALCOMB
Born Niagara Falls, New York, 1904. Lives in New York City
31 *Conflict, oil, 1941*

GREENE, GERTRUDE
Born Brooklyn, New York, 1907. Lives in New York City
32 *Construction, wood and steel, 1942*

GRIS, JUAN
Born Madrid, Spain, 1887. Died in Paris, 1927
33 *Still life, oil, 1917*
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

HELION, JEAN
Born Couterne, France, 1904. Lives in South of France
34 *Abstraction, oil, 1937*
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

HOLTZMAN, HARRY
Born New York City, 1912 Studio in N. Y. C. Lives in Kansas
35 *Sculpture, oil on gessoed masonite 1941-42*

HOLTY, CARL ROBERT
Born Freiburg, Germany, 1900. Lives in New York City

36 ***Circus Form, oil, 1938***

HOWARD, CHARLES
Born Montclair, New Jersey, 1899. Lives in San Francisco

37 ***Motivization, oil, 1940***
Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, for the Artist

KANDINSKY, WASSILY
Born Moscow, Russia, 1866. Lives near Paris, France

38 ***Serene, oil, 1924***
Lent by J. B. Neuman

39 ***Monde Bleu, oil with sand on canvas, 1934***
Lent by the Nierendorf Gallery, New York

KLEE, PAUL
Born near Berne, Switzerland, 1879. Died 1940 in Muralto-Lugano

40 ***Fugenartig, watercolor, 1921***
Lent annonymously

41 ***Four Sectioned Palace, oil, 1933***
Lent by the Nierendorf Gallery, New York

LEGER, FERNAND
Born Argentan, France, 1881. Lives in New York City

42 ***Root, oil, 1941***

43 ***Ballet Mecanique, a Cubist Film, 1924***
Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, New York

LIPCHITZ, JACQUES
Born Druskeniki, Polish Lithuania, 1891. Lives in New York City

44 ***Arrival, bronze, 1940***
Lent by the Buchholz Gallery, New York

LISSITZKY, EL
Born Smolensk, Russia, 1890. Lives in Moscow

45 ***Proun, college, 1926***
Lent annonymously

MALEVICH, KASIMIR
Born Kiev, Russia, 1878. Died in Leningrad, 1935

46 ***Painting, 1917***

MARCOUSSIS, LOUIS
Born Warsaw, Poland, 1883. Died in Paris, 1941

47 ***Abstraction, Anver, oil, 1928***
Lent by Madame Helena Rubinstein

MASSON, ANDRE
Born Balagny, France, 1896. Lives in New York City

48 ***Birth of a Bird, pastel and guache on canvas, 1941***
Lent by the Buchholz Gallery, New York

MATULKA, JAN
Born Prag, Cechoslovakia, 1892. Lives in New York City

49 ***Forms in Space, oil, 1941***

MIRO, JOAN
Born Montroig near Barcelona, 1893. Lives in France

50 ***Composition, oil, 1933***
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

MOHOLY-NAGY, LADISLAUS
Born Borsod, Hungary, 1895. Lives in Chicago

51 ***Construction, plexiglas, 1941***
Lent by the School of Design in Chicago

MONDRIAN, PIET
Born Amersfoort, Holland, 1872. Lives in New York City

52 ***Painting, oil, 1939-42***
Lent by the Valentine Gallery, New York

GEORGE L. K. MORRIS, **25**
Born New York City, 1905. Lives in New York City

53 ***Composition, oil, 1939***

54 ***Composition, oil, 1940-41***

55 ***Abstract Distraction, film, 1940***

NICHOLSON, BEN
Born Denham, England, 1894. Lives in Londen

56 ***Relief, wood, 1935***
Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, New York

57 ***Composition, watercolor, 1940***
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

OZENFANT, AMEDEE
Born Saint-Quentin, France, 1886. Lives in New York City

58 ***Fugue in Grays, oil, 1929***

PEREIRA, I. RICE
Born Boston, 1907. Lives in New York City

59 ***Composition in Red, oil, 1941***

PEVSNER, ANTOINE
Born Orel, Russia, 1886. Lives in South of France

60 ***Construction, metal, 1927***
Lent by 'Art of this Century'

PICASSO, PABLO RUIZ
Born Malaga, Spain, 1881. Lives in Paris

61 *The Poet, oil, 1911*
Lent by Mr. George L. K. Morris

62 *Harlequin, guache, 1913*
Lent by Madame Helena Rubinstein

63 *Still life, college, 1917*
Lent by Madame Helena Rubinstein

RICHTER, HANS
Born Berlin, Germany, 1891. Lives in New York City

64 *Rhythm 40, scroll painting, 1940*

65 *Fuge, scroll painting, 1919*

66 *Rhythmus 21, film, 1921-22*
Lent by the Museum of Modern Art, New York

ROSZAK, THEODORE J.
Born Inowroclaw, Poland, 1907. Lives in New York City

67 *Intersection of planes, painted wood and glass, 1939*

68 *Construction, metal, 1941*

ROSENBORG, RALPH M.
Born New York City, 1911. Lives in New York City

69 *Night, oil, 1940*
Lent by the Willard Gallery, New York

SHAW, CHARLES G.
Born New York City, 1892. Lives in New York City

70 *Composition Architectural, oil, 1939*

SMITH, DAVID
Born Decature, Indiana, 1906. Lives in New York State

71 *Construction, metal, 1937*
Lent by the Willard Gallery, New York

VILLON, JACQUES
Born Damville, France, 1875. Lives in Paris, France

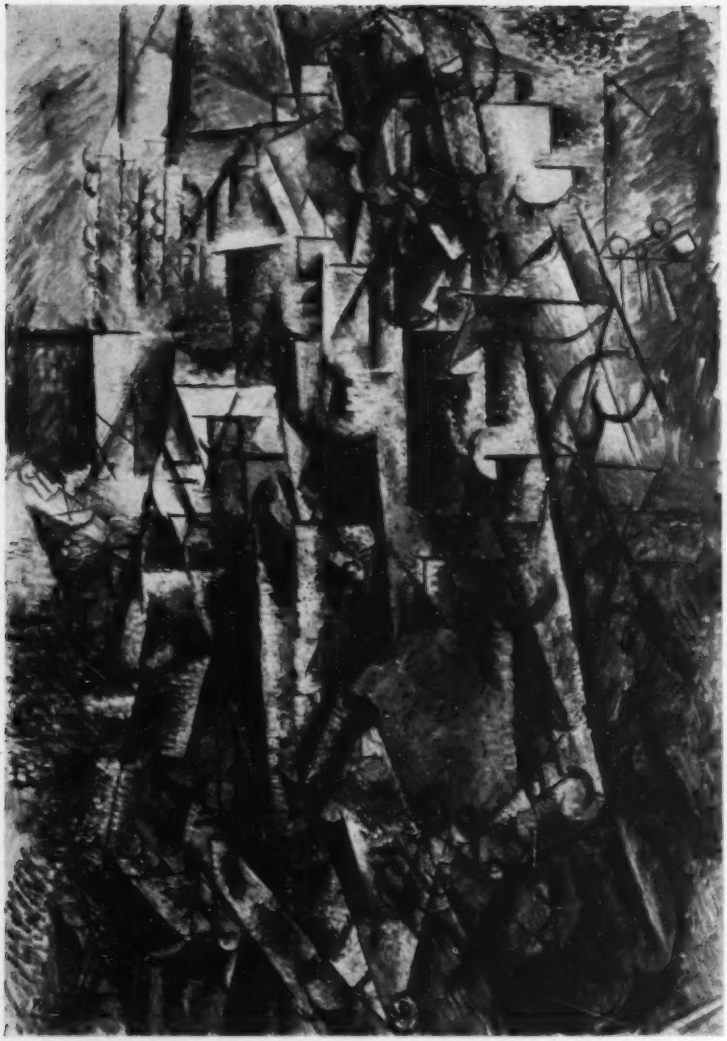
72 *The Shell oil, 1933*
Lent by Mr. Walter Pach

WICHT, JOHN VON
Born Holstein, Germany, 1888. Lives in New York City

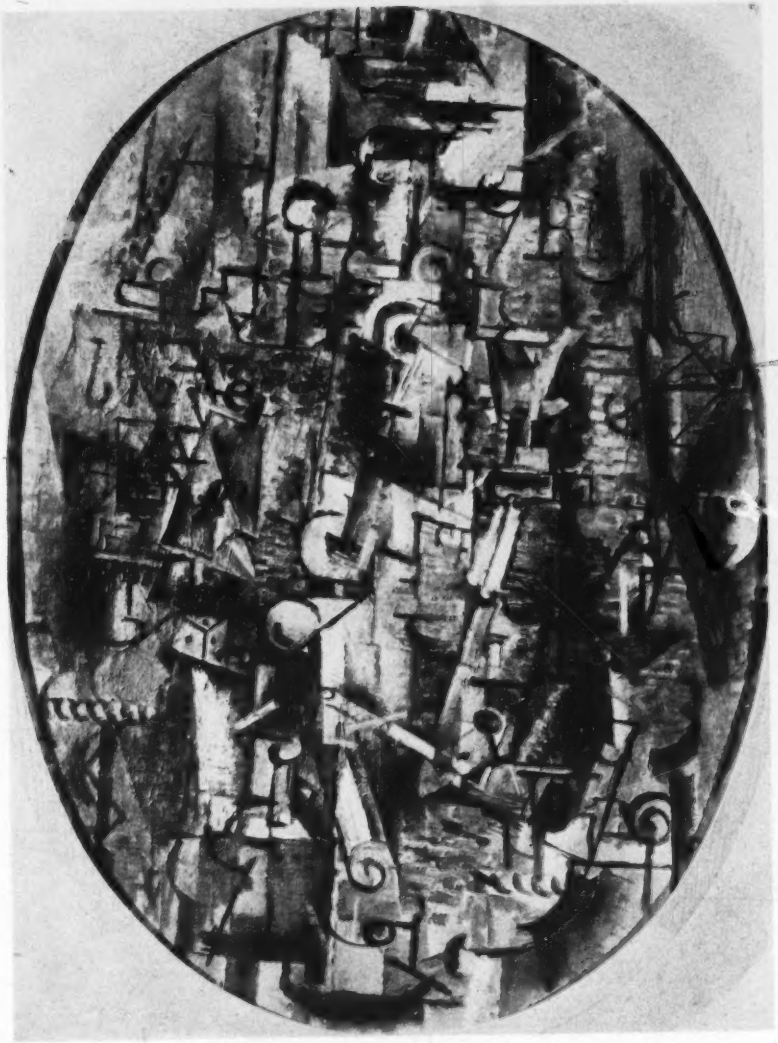
73 *Curves, watercolor, 1941*

XCERON, JEAN
Born in Greece, 1890. Lives in New York City

74 *Composition, oil, 1941*



Picasso: The Poet, 1911

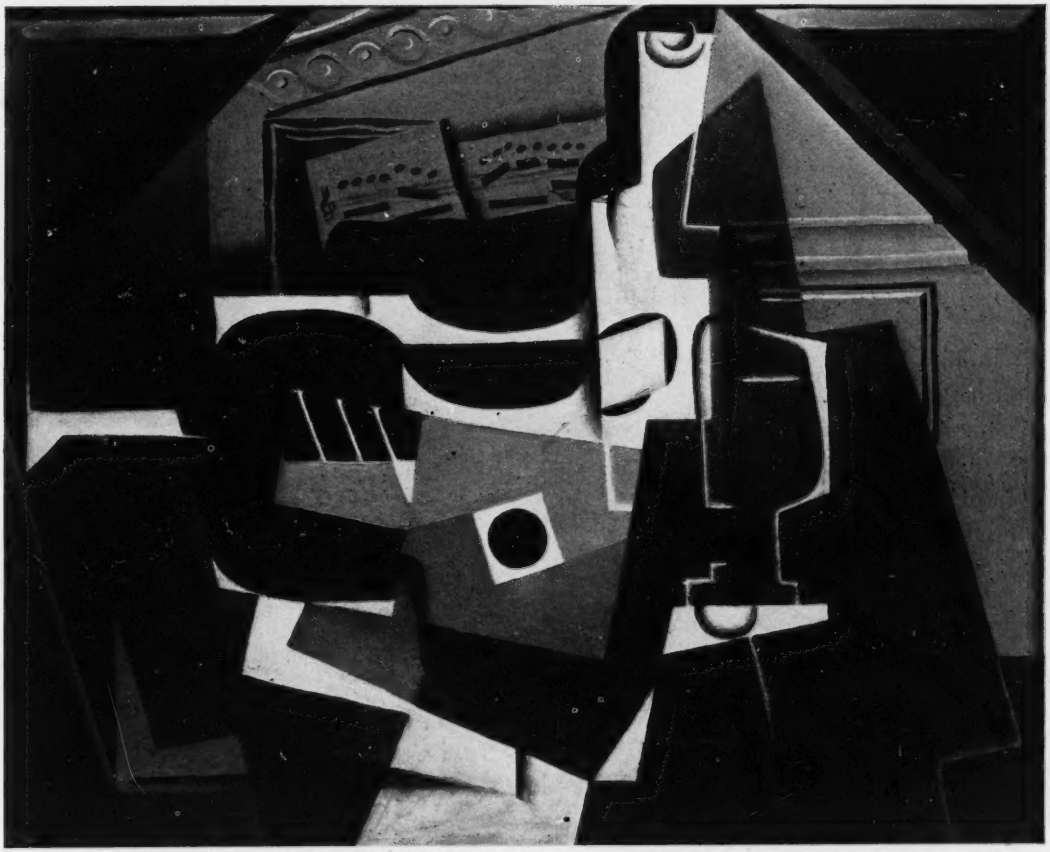


Braque: Cubiste Composition, 1912

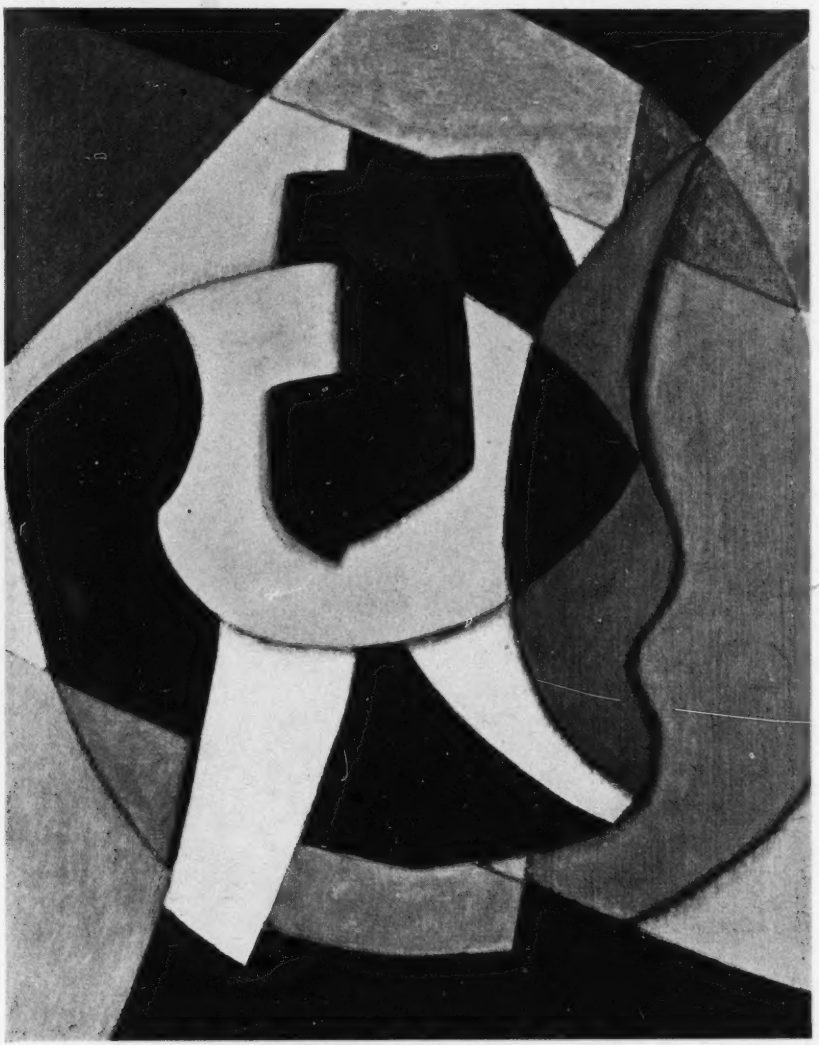
Duchamp: Young Man in a Train, 1912

Kandinsky: Serene, 1924

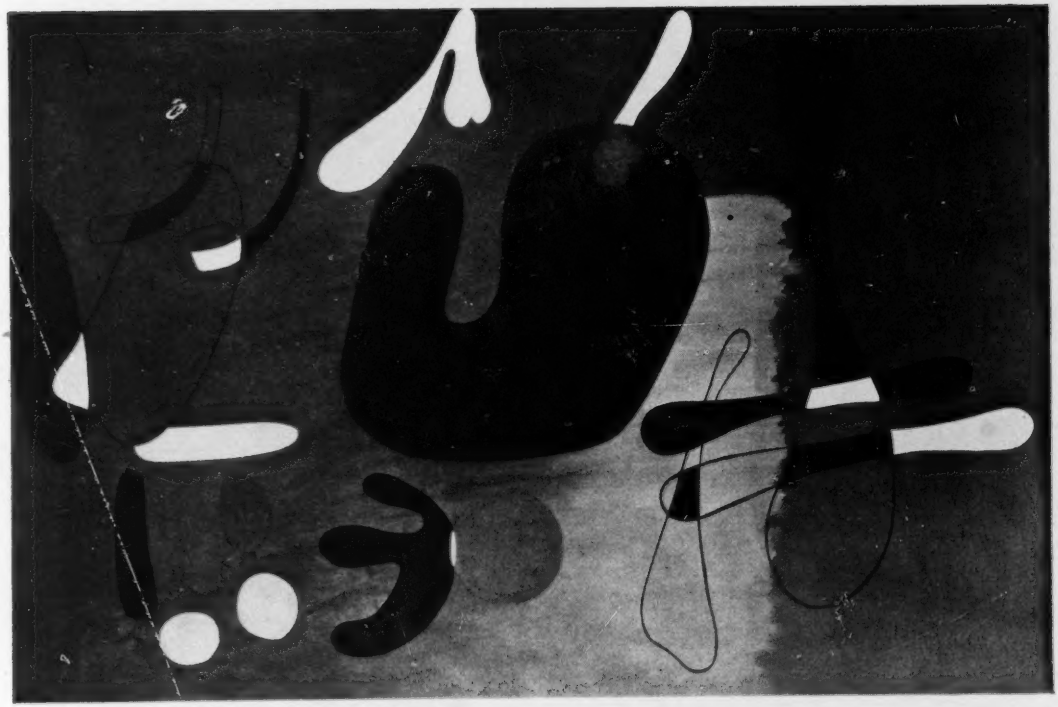
Davis: Hot Still-Scape for six colors, 1941



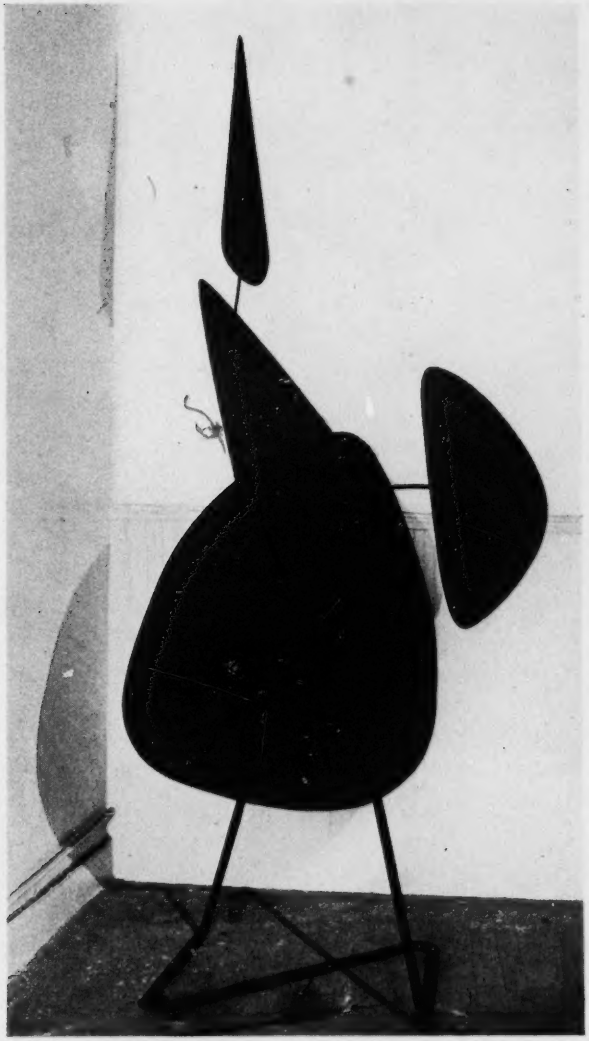
Gris: Still life, 1917



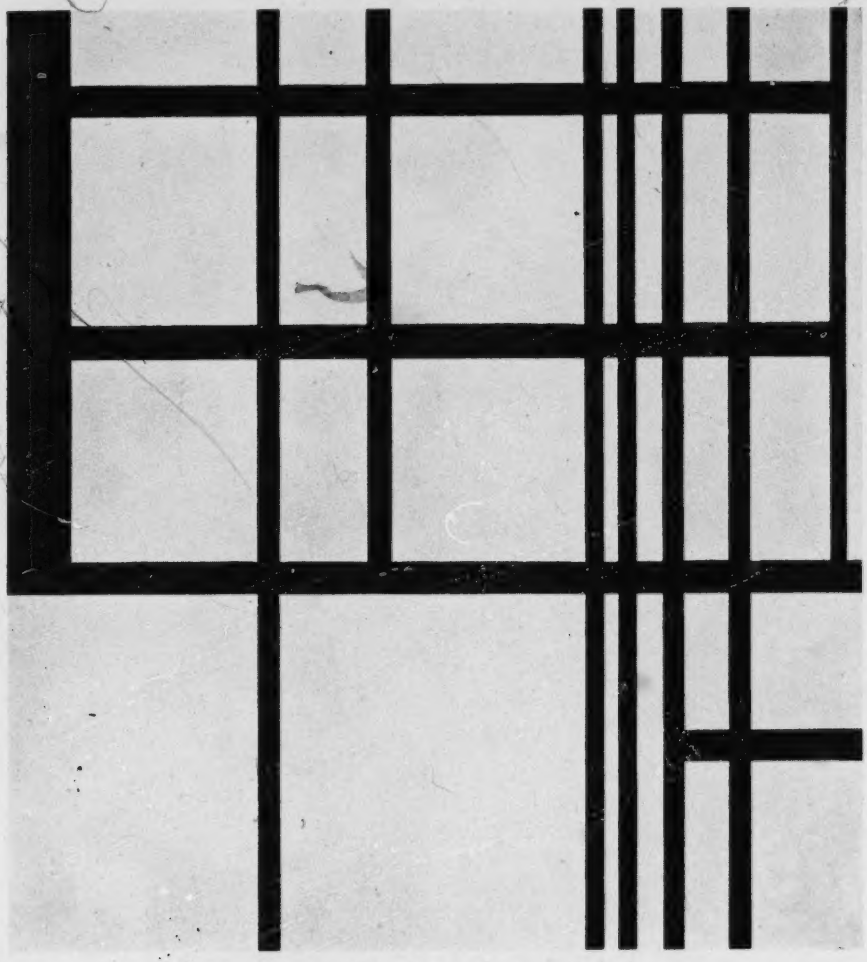
Morris: Composition, 1939



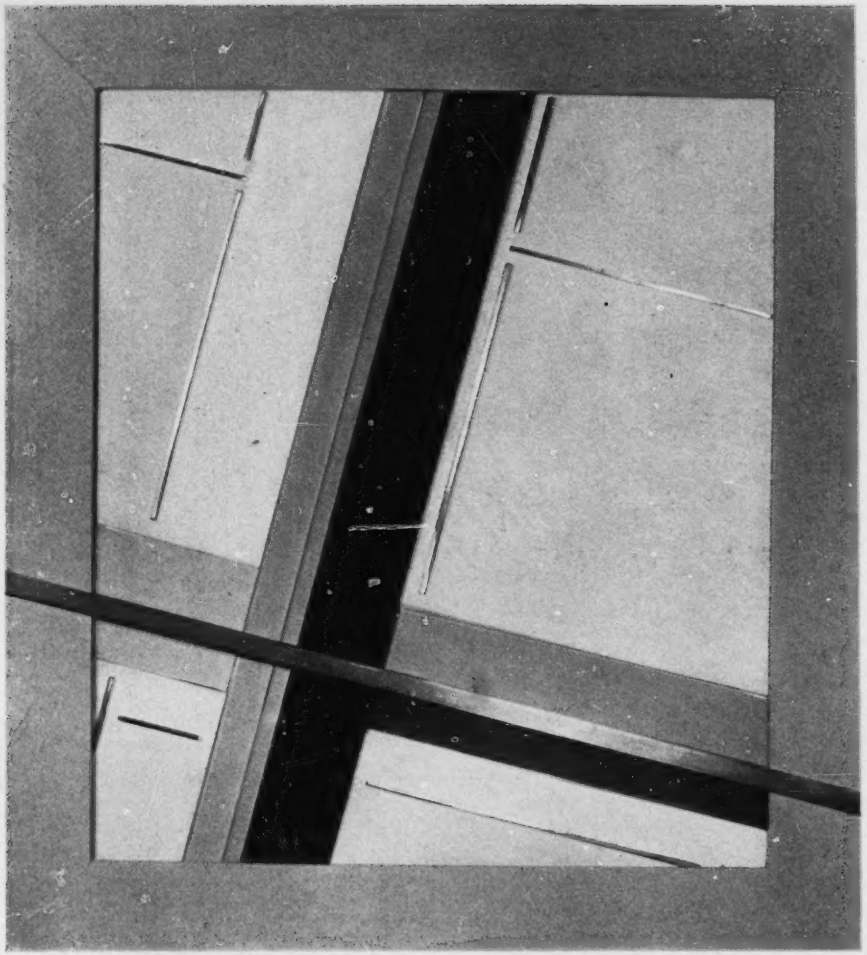
Miro: Composition, 1933



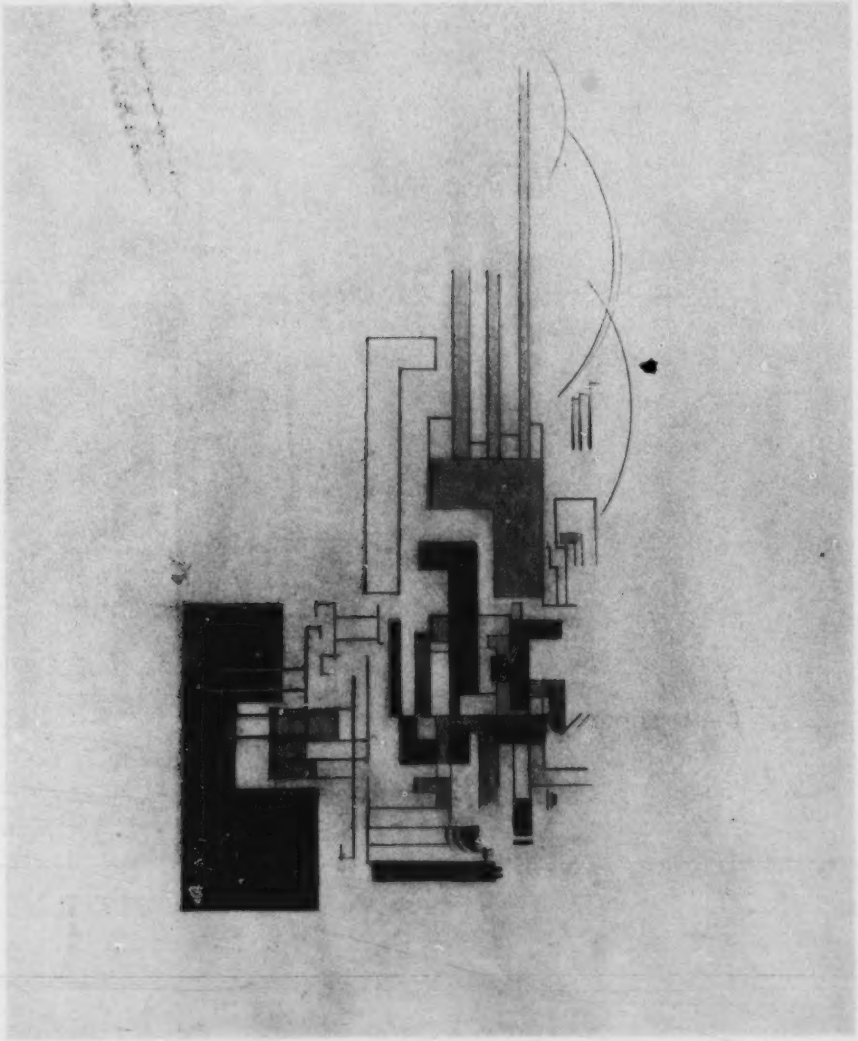
Calder: Mobile, 1939



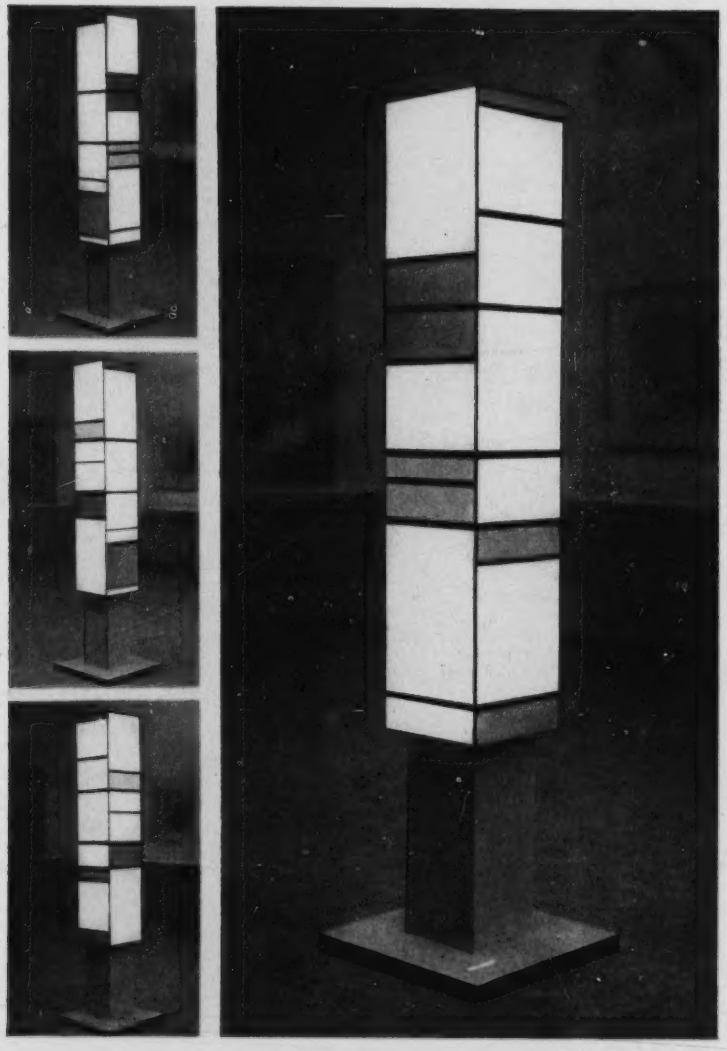
Mondrian: Painting, 1939/42



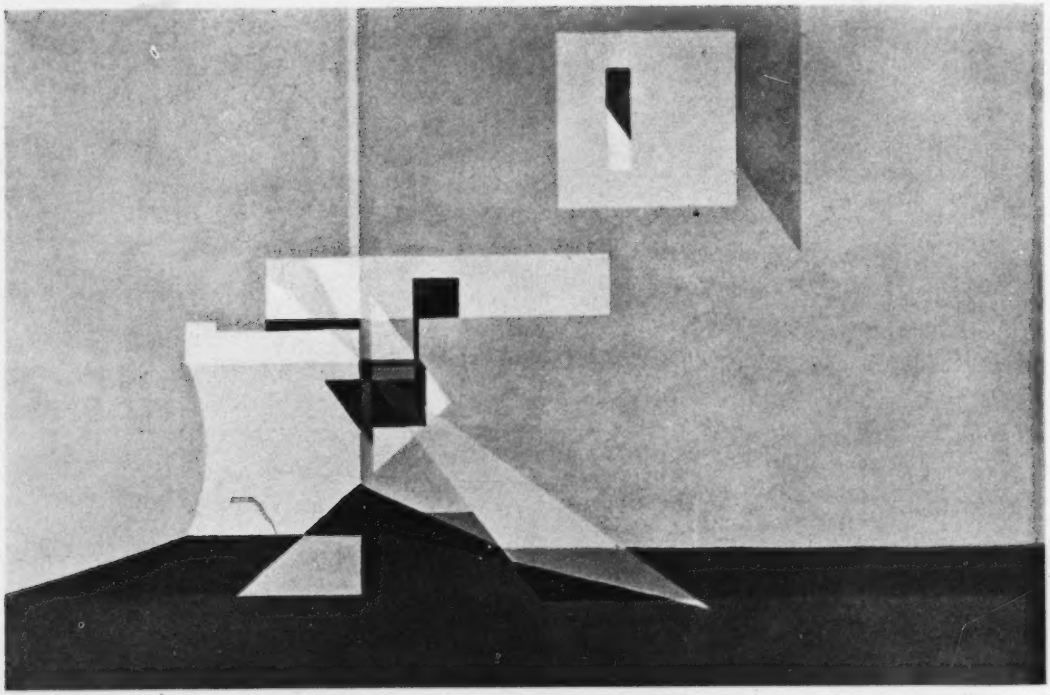
Domela-Nieuwenhuis: Construction, 1935



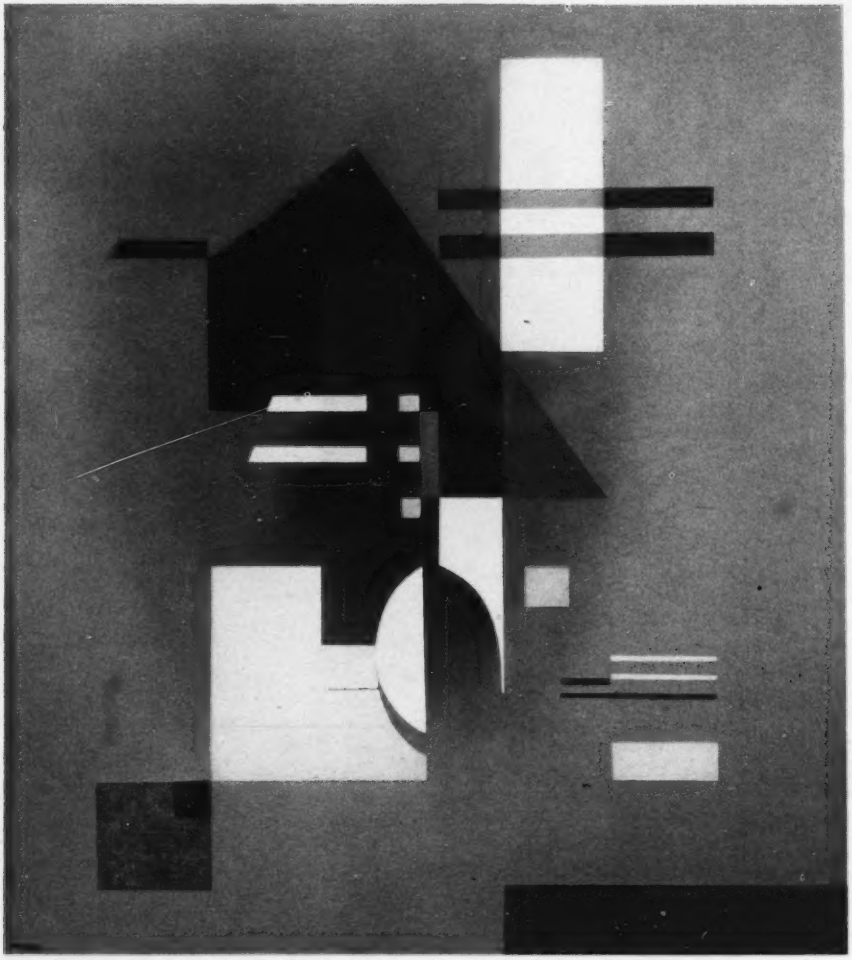
Richter: Fuge, 1919



Holtzman: Sculpture, 1941/42



Greene: Conflict, 1941



Xceron: Composition, 1941

Holty: Circus Form, 1938

NOTES